

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 08803 221102Z

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SNM-02 JUSE-00 TRSE-00 CIAE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 IO-13 OES-06 /038 W

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

INFO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC C 1408

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 8803

FOL MSG RECEIVED ACTION BANGKOK BEING PASS FOR YOUR INFO:

QUOTE:

O 220623Z APR 77

FM AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

TO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK IMMEDIATE 3093

C O N F I D E N T I A L CHIANG MAI 149

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR, TH

SUBJECT: SEIZURE OF REFINERY ON HUAI CHAE, CHIANG DAO DISTRICT

REFS: (A) BANGKOK 8733 (B) CHIANG MAI 143

1. SUMMARY: THE SEIZURE OF THE REFINERY IN CHIANG DAO DISTRICT ON APRIL 20, WAS THE RESULT OF BBP INTELLIGENCE SOURCES. THE OPERATORS OF THE REFINERY WERE PROBABLY SMALL INDEPENDENT CHINESE HAW TRADERS. TWO US SUPPLIED HELICOPTERS WERE USED IN THE RAID AND A DEA AGENT INSPECTED THE SITE AFTER THE SEIZURE. END OF SUMMARY.

2. THE REFINERY SEIZED BY BBP FORCES ON APRIL 20TH WHICH
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WAS VISITED ON THE SAME DAY BY S/NM COORDINATOR MATHEA FALCO WAS DISCOVERED AS A RESULT OF INDEPENDENT BBP INTELLIGENCE RESOURCES. GENERAL VICHAI VICHAIPHANAPHAT, BBP REGION 3 COMMANDER, TOLD ME THAT A LOCAL RESIDENT OF THE AREA HAD SPOTTED THE REFINERY AND HAD PASSED THE INFORMATION ON TO A BBP INTELLIGENCE SOURCE. HOWEVER SEVERAL DAYS ELAPSED BETWEEN THE TIME WHEN HE STUMBLED ON TO THE SITE AND THE TIME

WHEN THE INFORMATION REACHED THE BBP HEADQUARTERS.

3. WE SUSPECT THAT THE OPERATORS KNEW THAT THEY HAD BEEN SPOTTED AND THEREFORE WITHDREW FROM THE AREA. BECAUSE OF THE EQUIPMENT LEFT AT THE SCENE, BELIEVE THE REFINERY MAY HAVE BEEN ONLY TEMPORARILY VACATED WITH THE OPERATORS PLANNING ON CONTINUING OPERATION AT A FUTURE DATE.

4. THE OPERATORS HAVE NOT BEEN IDENTIFIED. HOWEVER THEY PROBABLY WERE SMALL INDEPENDENTS OF CHINESE HAW ORIGIN.

5. DEA WAS NOT INVOLVED IN GATHERING INTELLIGENCE OR PLANNING THE RAID, BUT A CHIANG MAI DEA AGENT DID MAKE AN ON-SITE INSPECTION OF THE REFINERY AND DID COLLECT SAMPLES OF THE CHEMICALS FOR DEA ANALYSIS.

6. TWO U.S. PROVIDED NARCOTIC HELICOPTERS WERE USED AND TWENTY BBP TROOPS TOOK PART IN THE RAID. A THIRD HELICOPTER PROVIDED TRANSPORTATION FOR MS. FALCO'S INSPECTION OF THE OPIUM PRODUCING AREAS AND TOOK HER TO THE SCENE OF THE REFINERY.

7. AN ESTIMATE OF THE AMOUNT OF MORPHINE AND HEROIN WHICH COULD HAVE BEEN PRODUCED FROM THE NINETY LITERS OF OPIUM SOLUTION WOULD ONLY BE POSSIBLE AFTER A CHEMICAL ANALYSIS DETERMINES WHAT PER CENT OF OPIUM WAS IN SOLUTION.

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8. WHILE SOME CYNICS MIGHT QUESTION THE "COINCIDENCE" OF THIS RAID JUST AS MS. FALCO WAS MAKING HER VISIT TO NORTH THAILAND, THOSE WHO VISITED THE SITE HAVE NO QUESTION THAT THIS HAD BEEN AN OPERATING REFINERY USED TO PRODUCE QUANTITIES OF MORPHINE AND POSSIBLY SOME HEROIN. ALTHOUGH TEMPORARILY OUT OF PRODUCTION, THE OPERATORS COULD HAVE RETURNED AT ANY TIME AND INITIATED PRODUCTION AGAIN, PROVIDED THAT THEY HAD THE OPIUM AND THE ORDERS FOR THE FINISHED PRODUCT.

9. ALL INDICATIONS ALSO SUPPORT THE BBP CLAIM THAT THEIR OWN INTELLIGENCE LEARNED OF THE EXISTENCE OF THE REFINERY ONLY A DAY OR TWO PRIOR TO THE VISIT OF MS. FALCO. HOWEVER WE SUSPECT THAT THE BBP WERE MORE THAN HAPPY TO USE THE OPPORTUNITY TO DEMONSTRATE THEIR WILLINGNESS TO MOVE AGAINST NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS. GENERAL VICHAI WAS BOTH IMPRESSED AND PLEASED AT MS. FALCO'S GENUINE INTEREST AND HER WILLINGNESS TO VISIT THE SITE DESPITE THE REQUIREMENT TO TRAMP DOWN A STEEP HILL THROUGH

JUNGLE AND MUD.

TANNER

UNQUOTE:

WHITEHOUSE

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NNN

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